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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 14 titles deal with the following topics: (1) the relationships between power, gender, and mode of conflict management in superior/subordinate relationships; (2) the interaction processes of groups with varying levels of consensus; (3) the interpersonal communication of Zelda and Scott Fitzgerald; (4) the communicative rules that should guide the use of deceptive messages within noninterpersonal and interpersonal relationships; (5) reflexive loops in conversation; (6) the effectiveness of the measure of communication apprehension as an exercise in assessment center evaluation; (7) the relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal communication patterns; (8) the use of the Cartoon Listening Test for interpersonal communication; (9) the social and cognitive conditions for communication behaviors; (10) the relationship of primary mode of human communication to the development of complex cognition; (11) communication and attributions in interpersonal conflict; (12) functional communication patterns and relational concern in interpersonal conflict; (13) social style and interpersonal communication competence in the public school superintendency; and (14) communication variables that affect defensive and supportive reactions. (FL)

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Interpersonal, Nonverbal, and Small Group Communication:

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THREE COMMUNICATION VARIABLES WHICH AFFECT DEFENSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE REACTIONS

POWER AND CONFLICT: AN ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN POWER, GENDER AND MODE OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN SUPERIOR-SUBORDINATE RELATIONSHIPS Order No. 8102006

CONRAD, CHARLES RAYMOND, PH.D. *University of Kansas*, 1980. 163pp.

Organizational theorists have long been concerned with managing intra-organizational conflict. In recent years this concern has had two foci. "Structural" models have attempted to discover the sources of conflict and to propose structural changes that will reduce the incidence and/or intensity of organizational conflict. "Process" models have prescribed behaviors that would reduce the frequency and/or difficulty of resolving intra-organizational conflict. Many process models have proposed that conflicts will be less frequent, less intense, and/or more readily resolvable when members of organizations adopt "participatory" or "problem-solving" modes of managing conflict than when they adopt competitive or avoidant modes.

Unfortunately, both in laboratory research and in applications to "real world" organizations, these prescriptions have had mixed results. In response, researcher-theorists have searched for the characteristics of organizations and of members of organizations that might influence the relative effectiveness of participatory, avoidant and forcing (competitive) modes of conflict management.

Focusing on superior-subordinate conflict, this study proposes that subordinates' responses to the conflict-managing behaviors of their supervisors are related to their perceptions of the power relationship that exists between themselves and their supervisors. Surveys composed of a series of forced-choice and open-ended questions were completed by the managers of twenty-five units of a hotel and motel firm and by each of his/her immediate subordinates. Survey questions asked each subject to provide demographic information, to report his/her perceptions of the superior-subordinate power relationship, the mode of conflict management used by the supervisor, or his/her responses to the conflict. The inter-relationships between three types of verbal responses to conflict (subordinates' affective responses, evaluations of the quality of the decisions that emerged from the conflicts, and evaluations of the overall effectiveness of the conflict-managing behaviors of the supervisor), two modes of conflict management (confrontation and forcing), ten dimensions of the superior-subordinate power relationship (the supervisors' status, their influence with their supervisors, and their position, reward, referent and expert power and the subordinates' status, options for employment outside of the organization, expert and position power) and the genders of the supervisors and the subordinates were examined. Two sets of conclusions were supported by the results.

I. An alpha factor analysis indicated that the superior-subordinate power relationship could be defined by four dimensions: the personal power of the supervisor, the position power of the two parties, the personal power of the subordinate, and the reward power of the supervisor. The results of a series of ANOVAs and multiple regression analyses indicated that (1) subordinates' verbal responses to the conflict management actions of their supervisors are substantially influenced by the perceived power relationship, (2) aspects of the personal power of both parties significantly influence responses to conflict, while aspects of the supervsors' position power have no significant impact, and (3) the relative salience of different dimensions of the power relationship varies substantially across the different modes of conflict management, the different types of subordinate response and the gender of the subordinate.

II. Similar data analyses revealed a complex inter-relationship between dimensions of the power relationship, mode of conflict management and response to conflict. The effects of the forcing mode were highly dependent on the power relationship; the effects of the confrontation mode were largely independent of the power relationship. The inter-relationships between power, gender and mode of conflict management varied substantially across the different types of subordinate response.

Implications of the results for (1) theories of organizational communication and conflict resolution, (2) the management of superior-subordinate conflict, and (3) organizational training programs were developed in detail.

INTERACTION ANALYSIS OF GROUPS WITH VARYING LEVELS OF CONSENSUS Order No. 8100996

DESTEPHENS, MARY ROLAYNE SMITH, PH.D. *The University of Utah*, 1980. 169pp. Chairman: B. Aubrey Fisher

Previous consensus research is based upon no consistent definition of consensus, nor does any encompassing theoretical basis for the study of consensus exist. Subsequently, the investigation of consensus, at best, has taken a shotgun approach to relating diverse variables to group decision agreement/satisfaction/commitment, and contradictory and indefinite findings about the nature of consensus have resulted. This investigation attempts to avoid this confusion by providing a theoretical perspective which both clearly indicates the assumptions of the researcher, and which also necessitates the examination of the group interaction for recurring patterns.

Specifically, the study considers the comparative interaction of the first and final meetings of low consensus groups, the first and final meetings of high consensus groups, the first meetings of high and low consensus groups, and the final meetings of high and low consensus groups. Consensus was determined by individual group member responses on a set of semantic differential type scales.

The groups examined were part of the basic small group course. They were zero history continuing groups and were audio-taped at the same point in their group development. The audio tapes were coded using systems of both Relational Communication (RELCOM) and the Fisher Interaction Analysis System (FIAS). Inter-rater reliability was computed using Geutzkow's formula and was acceptable for reliability both prior to and after actual coding.

Results indicated that the interaction was significant for all comparisons with the FIAS coding. That is, on the content level of communication, high and low consensus groups are significantly different in terms of their interaction patterns. However, RELCOM results demonstrated significant differences for the first meetings of high and low consensus groups and the final meetings of both high and low consensus groups. The first and final meeting within group comparison for high and low consensus groups was not significant. Apparently, both high and low consensus groups' relational communication changed little over each group's history. All significant results were at the .01 level according to the Anderson-Goodman assessment of stationarity and homogeneity.

The study findings indicate that the communication patterns of high and low consensus groups are significantly different. Basically, high consensus groups tend to engage in much more complementary behavior, while low consensus groups engage in symmetrical behavior. High consensus groups tend to have discussion which is characterized by deference, while more equivalent behaviors are present in low consensus groups.

COURTSHIP AS A RHETORICAL FORM: AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION OF ZELDA AND SCOTT FITZGERALD Order No. 8105734

GOODALL, HAROLD LLOYD, JR., PH.D. *The Pennsylvania State University*, 1980. 296pp. Adviser: Gerald M. Phillips

The purposes of this study were to (a) demonstrate a model of courtship rhetoric applicable to the understanding of how interpersonal communication creates, develops, and ends human relationships, and to (b) demonstrate that biography is a useful source of information about human relationships. By using biography to generate the data about the contents and contexts of talk and action over time, this study sought to produce a descriptive history of an entire relationship from the perspective of what was said and done in it.

Courtship is defined as a social behavior characteristic of someone seeking social, political, or interpersonal favor from someone else who has the power to bestow favor. The concept of courtship rhetoric was derived historically, and exhibited three critical assumptions: (1) a hierarchy exists in all social relationships; (2) an individual's position in that hierarchy can be defined by the individual's public and private behavior; and (3) an individual may improve hierarchical position by studying the behavior of higher-ups (however "higher-ups" may be defined by the relationship), and

by striving to imitate those behaviors. The courtship model consists of three stages of development based on the operation of form, power, and equity in the relationship. The three stages are (1) a beginning, characterized by a rhetoric of invention; (2) a middle, characterized by a rhetoric of management; and (3) an ending, characterized by a rhetoric of judgement.

The relationship between Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald, from July, 1918-December, 1940, was used for examination in this study. This relationship was chosen because there are several good biographies available in which to generate the data about talk, action, and contexts. The procedure for this investigation consisted of (a) collecting, classifying, and verifying the statements and actions of the relationship between 1918-1940; (b) developing a chronology of events in the relationship based on statements and actions; (c) writing a biographical narrative from the perspective of the courtship model; (d) presenting the analysis of the data using the chronology and the biographical narrative to answer questions raised by the courtship model; and (e) presenting a summary of the findings and recommendations for future research.

Two conclusions were drawn as a result of this investigation. First, the courtship model was demonstrated to be a productive tool for the critical interpersonal relationships. The critical questions raised by the concepts of rhetorical form, power, and equity were found to be a viable research methodology for this study, and possibly for future studies using the courtship idea. Second, biography was found to be an appropriate and highly productive source of data about the talk, action, and contexts of human relationships.

There were three tentative hypotheses reached as a result of doing this work. First, there is a power structure discernable in a relationship capable of rigidity, modification, and change based on what each party says and does in relation to the overall goals of that relationship. Second, the community or audience to whom the appeals are directed defines the ways and means of attaining articulated goals. And third, the messages communicated between people will be perceived as intentional even if they are not constricted intentionally, or if the original intention is not the one that is perceived or attributed to the message. If communication is capable of creating reality, then what is not communicated does not exist for that relationship.

AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE COMMUNICATIVE RULES WHICH SHOULD GUIDE THE USE OF DECEPTIVE MESSAGES WITHIN NON-INTERPERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

HOWARD, BARBARA RYON, PH.D. *University of Southern California*, 1980. Chairperson: Professor Edward M. Bodaken

In recent years, several scholars have suggested that the ability to communicate deceptively may be important for personal survival as well as for the development and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. However, the values of deceptive communication and the rules which should guide its use have not been explored empirically. It was the purpose of this research to investigate empirically receivers' perceptions of messages that are non-deceptive, deceptive by commission, and deceptive by omission in interactions with strangers and close friends. The ultimate goal of the research was the generation of data-based rules which specify receivers' perceptions of whether deceptive messages should be used and how their use is affected by the degree of the relationship between the communicators.

Two independent variables were tested: message and relationship. Three message types--non-deceptive, deceptive by commission, and deceptive by omission--were manipulated. Two levels of relationship--stranger and close friend--were examined.

Participants in the study were 216 students enrolled in the basic speech course (Speech 254) at New Mexico State University in the Spring semester, 1980. The participants were randomly assigned to the six conditions. They received a packet which included one of six scenarios in which they were to imagine that they were the receiver of a message that was manipulated to represent one of the three message types. They were to further imagine that the message was sent by a stranger or a close friend. After reading the scenario, each participant responded to the communication behavior described in it on a set of seven Likert-type scales. In addition, they were asked to write a brief paragraph in which they described the communication behavior in the scenario and told how they would react to it.

The data from the seven scales were factor analyzed. Two factors--appropriateness and negative sanction--were generated and used as the dependent variables in the research. Items included in the questionnaire to assess participant's perceptions of the regularity of the various message types did not form a meaningful factor.

A 3 x 2 analysis of variance indicated that the non-deceptive message was evaluated as significantly more appropriate than were either of the types of deceptive messages. In addition, any type of message sent by a friend, in this study, was evaluated as more appropriate than any type of message sent by a stranger. There were no significant findings regarding negative sanctioning behavior and no interaction effects. Based on the strong appropriateness finding, the following rule was generated: Rule 1. If a communicator wishes his/her behavior to be judged as appropriate in a peer evaluation situation, s/he should give a non-deceptive evaluation of the performance in question.

Implications of the research with regard to methodological and conceptual considerations were discussed and suggestions for further research were made.

A THEORY OF REFLEXIVE LOOPS IN CONVERSATION

Order No. 8101339

JOHNSON, KENNETH MICHAEL, PH.D. *University of Massachusetts*, 1980. 258pp. Director: Professor W. Barnett Pearce

Reflexivity has long been recognized as an emergent feature of the logical structures of human thought and actional systems. In various social scientific and philosophical literatures, the property of human logical structures to turn back upon themselves has been treated as both a reason for celebration and a cause for despair. Some literatures note that human reflexive logical systems facilitate the development of creativity, autonomy, and responsibility in the evolution of scientific thought and action. Other literatures suggest that reflexive logical systems in social science produce paradox, infinite regress, and solipsism. Two important questions are advanced. First, what are the capacities of various types of human constructed logical systems for autonomy and responsibility given their construction? Second, what are the capacities of these systems to account for their own reflexivity? The attempts of three literatures to deal with reflexivity are reviewed, a metalogical theory of reflexivity is developed, and the utility of the metalogic for the critique of existing theories of human thought and action is demonstrated.

Chapter 1 posits the primary thesis that the ultimate grounds of the social sciences is neither in the content of human social behavior nor in the content of a history of human meaning *per se*, but in the reflexivity of their own logics for construction and extension. As exemplars, Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Mead, and Parsons construct the logic of social order as temporally recursive, holonically-organized, and that such structures function in orderly and disorderly ways. Chapter 2 reviews the critical-analytic tradition in philosophy and science concerning the logical structures and functions of reflexivity. The sequence of works by Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Habermas serve as sources and as exemplars that reflexivity is an endemic feature in the logic of human thought and action, which may facilitate human development and evolution. Chapter 3 examines the role of reflexivity in contemporary philosophies of science in the empirical-analytic tradition. Here reflexivity in logical processes facilitate theory construction and measurement techniques through the scientific use of analogic reasoning. In addition, the logic of science is seen as reflexively grounded in itself, in structuralism and functionalism. The fourth chapter reviews the concept of reflexivity in functionalist and structuralist theories of formal logic. Two major formal approaches toward the management of reflexivity are discussed: finitistic and transfinitistic construction procedures. A critique concerning the generality of formal logical theories by informal logicians suggests greater utility in a transfinitistic approach.

The fifth chapter develops a metalogical theory of reflexivity consisting of existential hypotheses and predicative statements. The first existential hypothesis concerns the nature of finitistic and transfinitistic logical approaches to reflexivity in holonically-organized systems. The second characterizes the structures of four types of reflexive loops in holonically-organized systems and their relationships to autonomy. The final existential hypothesis examines the capacity of holonically-organized logical systems to address responsibility and autonomy. The six predicative statements comparatively analyze finitistic logical systems with a transfinitistic logical system in terms of their relative capacities to account for their own reflexivity and to offer their users autonomy and responsibility. In Chapter 6, the transfinitistic perspective is employed as a method of critique applied to three communication theories: Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson's pragmatic perspective, Habermas' Universal Pragmatics, and Pearce and Cronen's Coordinated Management of Meaning. Two theories are found to be finitistically limited in their capacities to account for reflexivity, while the third is transfinitistic although requiring further logical development concerning reflexivity. The final chapter addresses the implications of the metalogic for social science.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEASURE OF COMMUNICATION APPREHENSION AS AN EXERCISE IN ASSESSMENT CENTER EVALUATION

Order No. 8109686

KANDELMAN, HARRIET, PH.D. *University of Oregon*, 1980. 153pp. Adviser: William R. Elliott

Communication apprehension, defined as one's fear of communicating with another individual in a face-to-face situation, was measured in assessment centers in order to determine its utility as an assessment center exercise. A total of six organizations of the public and private sectors participated in this research. Both candidates and raters were surveyed in a field setting. A total of 187 candidates and 24 raters participated in the study. The data were collected between February and July of 1980.

Empirical techniques were used to analyze relationships between: (1) interactive and noninteractive exercise scores: (2) communication apprehension and interactive and noninteractive exercise scores; (3) interactive and noninteractive exercise scores, and communication apprehension and the hired/qualified decision. Rater rankings of the importance of interactive and noninteractive exercises for the hired/qualified decision were also examined.

Bivariate and multivariate methods of analyses were employed for candidate data analysis. Nonparametric analyses were applied to the rater data.

Two hypotheses received support: communication apprehension scores were negatively correlated with interactive exercise scores and interactive exercises were ranked higher by raters than were noninteractive exercises as important for the hired/qualified decision.

The hypotheses failing to find support were: (1) in terms of predictive ability for the hired/qualified categories, candidates' scores on interactive exercises will be a more important predictor than scores on the noninteractive exercises; (2) candidates' scores on interactive exercises will be higher for the hired/qualified candidates than for the nonhired/nonqualified candidates: (3) hired/qualified candidates will have lower communication apprehension scores than nonhired/nonqualified candidates: (4) communication apprehension will be a significant negative predictor of hired/qualified candidates.

This study recommends the measure of communication apprehension in assessment centers. It also establishes the importance of interactive and noninteractive exercises along with the measure of communication apprehension in assessment centers.

AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTRAPERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS

Order No. 8103116

LIPPARD, PAULA VIRGINIA, PH.D. *University of Colorado at Boulder*, 1980. 190pp. Director: Assistant Professor Alma Elaine Yarbrough

This study investigated the relationship between intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. It focused on the prediction that quality intrapersonal communication reflects, and is reflective of, quality interpersonal communication. Communication was defined as, "mutual creation of meaning between or among interdependent parties whose interdependence is modified by the meanings they generate." Intrapersonal communication was defined as "mutual creation of meaning between or among interdependent multiple parts of the self, whose interdependence is modified by the meanings they generate." The dream was established as the best means of monitoring intrapersonal communication. Eight patterns of quality intrapersonal communication were derived from dream research and used to create a Dream Rating Scale (DRS) as a measure of quality intrapersonal communication. The DRS was composed of ten categories, each of which could be assessed from 1 to 5.

Characteristics of quality interpersonal communication were derived from communication literature. O. J. Harvey's *This I Believe Test* was used to identify four groups of subjects, assumed to exhibit four different degrees of quality interpersonal communication: System 4 the highest degree, 3 next, 1 next, and 2, the lowest degree.

It was hypothesized that: (1) System 4 would receive the highest rating on the Dream Rating Scale (DRS); (2) System 3 would receive a higher rating on the DRS than System 1 or 2; and (3) System 1 would receive a higher rating on the DRS than System 2. These hypotheses were tested by analyzing 100 dream reports of 20 subjects: 5 subjects per system, 5 dream reports per subject. A Duncan ranges post hoc analysis confirmed Hypothesis I and III and partially confirmed Hypothesis II. However, there was no significant difference between the DRS scores of Systems 3 and 1. Supplementary analyses of the ten categories of the DRS revealed specific commonalities and differences in dream content among systems. A Principal Components Factor Analysis identified three factors which accounted for 99% of the variance between systems. These included: (1) "Dreamer Intervention," ability of the dreamer to make choices and take action in the dream event; (2) "Constructive Use of Allies and Self," ability of the dreamer to use allied parts of the self and the dreamer self in constructive dream activity; and (3) "Engagement of the Unconscious," ability of the dreamer to optimally engage an emerging part of the self in the dream.

Discussion of the results generally supported the overall prediction of the study that degree of quality intrapersonal communication paralleled degree of quality interpersonal communication. The lack of significant difference between the intrapersonal scores of System 1 and 3 was explained by reexamining the assumed degree of quality interpersonal communication and the individual category scores of these two systems. It was determined that Systems 1 and 3 vary their interpersonal and intrapersonal communication with context and the context of the study would not evoke that difference. It was also concluded that System 3 (like System 2) represents a transition phase in belief system and consequent behavior, from the more authoritarian stance of System 1 to the pragmatic perspective of System 4. Each of these transition systems is marked by apparent regression in quality communication behavior. This conclusion suggests that quality communication should be redefined to include fluctuations between cooperative and conflicting behavior as both are necessary for optimal development of the individual.

A CLINICAL VALIDATION STUDY OF RAMSDEN'S CARTOON LISTENING TEST FOR INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Order No. 8106306

MANOLY, BRENA GIBSON, PH.D. *The Medical College of Pennsylvania*, 1980. 141pp.

The ability of professionals and paraprofessionals to listen to the expressed concerns and questions of a patient or client, to "hear" his non-verbal messages, and to respond emphathetically to them will affect his satisfaction with the interaction and the likelihood of compliance with instructions for follow-up care. The Cartoon Listening Test for Interpersonal Communication is a paper and pencil instrument designed by Ramsden to measure these skills. The test was developed as an evaluation of the learning that occurred in a clinically oriented seminar in interpersonal communication skills for physical therapy students. Recent revisions have made the test applicable to a wide range of health professionals. The test consists of ten simple line drawings, each depicting a patient and a therapist in a treatment situation. In each "cartoon" the patient is saying something to the therapist. The subject must give two responses to each cartoon: "I Hear", i.e. what he thinks the patient is saying, and "I'd Say,", i.e. what he would say in response. The two responses are scored separately according to the degree to which they reflect an awareness of and attention to the affective components of the patient's statement and the interpersonal dynamics of the treatment situation.

This study examined the predictive validity of the instrument by comparing responses to the written test with responses to patients in the clinic for a group of occupational and physical therapists working in hospitals and rehabilitation centers in the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania area.

The methodology involved the audio recording of therapist-patient interaction during normal treatment sessions. Twenty-four therapists were recorded with from 2-5 patients each (a total of 78 patients) and were then given the Cartoon Test.

The taped interactions were transcribed onto index cards in a format paralleling the interactions on the cartoon test, i.e. a patient statement followed by a therapist response. The behavioral interactions and the written tests were then scored by independent raters.

The results of this study were not sufficient to support the validity of the instrument; the correlation (Pearson product moment) between the therapists' scores on the "I'd Say" portion of the Cartoon Test and the behavioral ratings was non-significant. Possible explanations that were explored and discussed were the small sample size, the homogeneity of the sample, internal consistency of the test, and the differences inherent in live vs. simulated interactions. It was concluded that further study should be done with a larger, more heterogeneous sample.

Finally, implications for the two professional groups in the sample, occupational and physical therapists, were discussed. The ignoring and denial of patients' feelings that were evident in the clinical interactions were disturbing. In addition, there was no correlation for this sample, between scores on the test or behavioral ratings and having had a communications course or length of experience in the clinic. Further communications training and specific skill development were felt to be indicated for both professional groups.

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL AND COGNITIVE CONDITIONS FOR COMMUNICATION BEHAVIORS

Order No. 8106196

MORRISON, ANDREW JAMES, PH.D. *The University of Michigan*, 1980. 98pp. Chairman: Peter Clarke

A major problem facing communication researchers has to do with identifying the social and cognitive conditions leading to communication behaviors. There have been few instances where researchers have had the opportunity to compare directly the variance in communication behaviors that can be explained by such social conditions as an individual's evaluation of the knowledge of referent others, against cognitive conditions such as an individual's own evaluation of the importance of a particular topic.

A survey of adolescents in Flint, Michigan and Toledo, Ohio was conducted to determine adolescent communication behaviors with regard to topics like job opportunities, family planning, and drug and alcohol use. This study affords the opportunity to answer the question: Do social *or* cognitive conditions for communication *consistently* relate more strongly to communication behaviors, when these two sets of conditions are placed "in competition" with each other in terms of explaining variance in those communication behaviors?

Three types of communication behaviors were studied: mass media message discrimination, information seeking, and interpersonal communication between an adolescent and both parents.

The social conditions included measures of the number of individuals named by an adolescent as people who talked to the adolescent about a particular topic, and the adolescent's perception of the amount of knowledge about a topic held by peers and parents. The cognitive conditions included three measures of the adolescent's own knowledge about a topic, and the perceived personal importance of the topic to the adolescent.

Multiple Classification Analysis (MCA) was used to determine the relationship of each social and cognitive condition with a communication behavior, controlling for the impact of all other conditions entered into the analysis. The test for consistency of relationships between conditions and communication behaviors is based on this statistical analysis conducted over four topics for a particular communication behavior, and over the three communication behaviors mentioned above for the same topic. Measures for conditions and communication behaviors were operationalized in the same manner across topics.

Findings suggest that social conditions, particularly the perception of the number of people in the social environment who are talking about a topic, consistently explain more variance in all types of communication behaviors across all topics. Cognitive conditions come into play mainly in relation to mass media message discrimination about potentially "sensitive" topics of discussion like drug use or family planning. There is, therefore, a strong rationale, based on these data, for the inclusion of "social context" measures in studies of communication behaviors to further test for the existence of this basic relationship across other populations (adults) and other topics.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF PRIMARY MODE OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPLEX COGNITION

Order No. 8103839

SHARPE, SUSAN L., PH.D. *University of Denver*, 1980. 208pp.

The concern of this study was the relationship of primary mode of human communication to the development of complex cognition.

The theoretical foundation of this research proposed that the perception of hierarchical levels of contrast has an important role in the development of complex cognition, and that the perception of contrast is best facilitated by the oral/aural mode of human communication.

The research sample consisted of two groups of matched subjects. In one group, the primary mode of human communication was oral/aural, and in the other group the primary mode of human communication was gestural/visual. Each of the gestural/visual subjects was congenitally, profoundly, sensori-neurally deaf. The subjects in both groups were aged 14 to 19, inclusive, had normal intelligence, and had no additional handicap. The subject pairs were matched on eight variables in addition to primary mode of human communication: age, sex, ethnic background, number of siblings, birth order, presence of a mother figure in the home, presence of a father figure in the home, and socioeconomic status. Fourteen subject pairs were tested, however, two pairs were excluded from the data analysis because of error in selection of two oral/aural subjects.

Complex cognition was measured through a test of analogical reasoning. The instrument was constructed by the researcher, according to the following criteria: (1) the instrument was composed entirely of analogies (A:B :: C:D); (2) half of the analogies contained words and half contained figures; (3) all words appearing in the analogies were confined to a second grade vocabulary level; and (4) half of the analogies contained paired terms which were similar and half contained paired terms which were dissimilar. Objective scores were obtained by summing the number of correct responses to the test items.

It was hypothesized that (1) the oral/aural subjects would achieve significantly higher overall scores on analogical reasoning; (2) the gestural/visual subjects would successfully complete significantly more Similar analogies than Dissimilar analogies; (3) neither of the subject groups would show a significant difference in performance on Word analogies and Figure analogies; and (4) gestural/visual subjects who had been exposed to a gestural/visual system since birth would not score significantly higher than subjects in the same sample group who had not been exposed to a gestural/visual system since birth. The fourth hypothesis was not tested because none of the subjects in the research sample were children of deaf parents.

Each of the three research hypotheses was tested by analyzing the subjects' scores with a *t*-test for significant difference between the means for correlated samples. Each of the hypotheses was supported. As predicted, the oral/aural subjects demonstrated superior analogical reasoning to that of the gestural/visual subjects, at a $p < .005$ level of significance. Both subject groups correctly solved significantly more Similar than Dissimilar analogies ($p < .005$ for both groups), but the oral/aural group correctly solved significantly more Dissimilar analogies than did the gestural/visual groups ($p < .01$). As predicted, the gestural visual group showed no significant difference in performance on Word vs. Figure analogies; the oral/aural group had a higher success rate on Word analogies than on Figure analogies ($p < .01$), but still performed significantly better than the gestural/visual on the Figure analogies ($p < .05$). Each finding thus contributed support to the theoretical position tested in this research.

The research results were discussed in the final chapter. The limitations of the study also were addressed in the last chapter, and suggestions were made for future research.

COMMUNICATION AND ATTRIBUTIONS IN INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

Order No. 8011398

SILLARS, ALAN LESLIE, PH.D. *The University of Wisconsin - Madison*, 1980. 260pp. Supervisor: Associate Professor Dean E. Hewes

A theoretical perspective on communication and interpersonal conflict was developed in this dissertation from a review of the experimental conflict literature and the literature on social attribution. This perspective states that: (a) People choose conflict resolution strategies based on attributions about their partner's intent, the locus of responsibility for conflict, and the stability of conflict. (b) Biases in the attribution process tend to encourage noncooperative modes of conflict resolution. (c) The choice of conflict strategies affects the likelihood of conflict resolution and satisfaction in the interpersonal relationship. These propositions were supported in two studies.

In Study I a typology of conflict resolution strategies was developed from open-ended accounts of naturally occurring conflicts between college dormitory roommates. In Study II conflict strategies were coded from videotaped discussions of conflict issues by college roommates. The main categories used to classify conflict strategies were "avoidance", "distributive", and "integrative". Avoidance strategies were defined as strategies which minimize explicit acknowledgment and discussion of conflict. Distributive strategies referred to explicit discussion of conflict with the partner which sustains a negative evaluation of the partner or seeks concessions. Integrative strategies were defined as explicit discussion which sustains a neutral or positive evaluation of the partner and does not seek concessions.

The perceived locus of responsibility for conflicts was related to conflict strategy in both studies. The perceived cooperative-competitive intent of the partner and the perceived stability of conflicts was associated with conflict strategy in Study I. Further, in Study II the sequential structure of discussions was affected by attributions of responsibility and stability. The sequential structure indicates how conflicts escalate and de-escalate over time. Distributive acts by the partner were likely to be reciprocated by subjects when the subjects held the partner responsible for a conflict. Distributive acts were likely to be followed by integrative acts when the subjects attributed responsibility to themselves.

Both studies found evidence of actor-partner biases in attributions. In Study I subjects attributed more responsibility for conflicts to their partners than to themselves and attributed greater stability to conflicts to the extent that responsibility was attributed to the partner. This pattern indicates a tendency to attribute conflicts to the stable traits of the partner. In Study II actor-partner differences in attributions of responsibility and stability interacted with relationship satisfaction. Highly satisfied roommates reversed the expected pattern of actor-partner differences--they attributed more responsibility to themselves than to their partners.

Finally, Study I found evidence of a relationship between conflict strategies and conflict outcomes. Strategies were related to the likelihood of resolving conflicts, the duration of conflicts, and the satisfaction with the partner. Thus, the three main premises of the theoretical perspective were supported in the two studies. The final chapter considers possible extensions of this perspective, including research on the effects of different causes of attributional bias and applications of attribution research to conflict intervention.

FUNCTIONAL COMMUNICATION PATTERNS AND RELATIONAL CONCERN IN INTERPERSONAL CONFLICT

Order No. 8105947

SPEAR, STEPHEN J., PH.D. *Indiana University*, 1980. 151pp.

This study investigated the relationship between the function of communication behaviors and post interaction levels of relational concern in interpersonal conflict. A review of literature suggested that communication behavior acts to transmit both content and relational information in interpersonal exchanges. The particular communication function of a behavior acts as the vehicle of transmission of relational information in dyads. Within this paradigm pragmatic relational messages are carried by the secondary communication function of the messages exchanged within dyads. A modified category system devised by Skinner was used to classify Functional Communication behaviors. This ten category system allowed each discrete communication act performed by members of a dyad to be coded by its function within the exchange.

This study further assumed that participants in dyadic communication episodes make judgments concerning each other's level of concern for their relationship based upon the functional communication behaviors used during an exchange. In testing this assumption it was first necessary to develop a measure of perceived relational concern in interpersonal communication situations. Such a measure was developed using the interpersonal conflict situation. Subjects were asked to rate a range of behaviors suggested by the literature as to their representativeness of eight levels of relational concern. A Guttman scale of relational concern was developed and used as the co-dependant variable in the study of the relationship between Functional Communication behaviors and perceived relational concern.

The main research hypothesis was addressed by placing subjects in a 'mixed-motive' conflict situation and videotaping their behavior. Coders then viewed the videotaped interactions and coded the communication behaviors of the subjects into the ten categories of Functional Communication behaviors. Five seconds was the unit of analysis for this coding. This data was analyzed using a Chi-Square Test for Independant Samples. This data was then compared to the perceived level of relational concern of the participants using Freeman's Coefficient of Differentiation.

It was found that at least a fifty percent association exists between a person's use of selected Functional Communication behaviors and their apparent level of relational concern. At each level of perceived relational concern at least two categories of Functional Communication behaviors were found to be reliable predictors of perceived relational concern.

The results of this study suggested that investigations of the specific communication acts which influence post interaction impressions of interactants is productive. Examination of the post interaction impressions of communicators' perceived level of relational concern is possible using a level-by-level Guttman type scale. This study further supported the notion that pragmatic relational information within a dyad is conveyed through the use of communication function. This line of investigation was shown to be a viable area for future research.

SOCIAL STYLE AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCY

Order No. 8100402

WALTERS, MARGARET ELLEN VAN PELT, PH.D. *Miami University*, 1980. 126pp.

This study was based on an examination of two constructs, Social Style and Interpersonal Communication Competence as they are reflected in the school superintendency. The focus of the study was other perceptions of superintendent behavior in relation to the assertiveness and responsiveness dimensions of Social Style, and the empathy, listening, self-disclosure, social anxiety, and versatility dimensions of Interpersonal Communication Competence.

Descriptive research methodology was used in this study. Two questionnaires were used to collect perceptions of superintendent behavior from administrator co-workers. The sample for this study was stratified to include superintendents representing two populations, superintendents of city/exempted village school districts and superintendents of local school districts. One hundred fifty-six observations of behavior of superintendents of city/exempted village school districts and 167 observations of behavior of superintendents of local school districts were used in the analysis.

The first part of the study examined the independent constructs of Social Style and Interpersonal Communication Competence of superintendents as perceived by administrator co-workers. The Expressive and Driver Social Styles were found to dominate the superintendency of both city/exempted village and local school districts. There was strong agreement that superintendent behaviors associated with four dimensions of Interpersonal Communication Competence: empathy, listening, social anxiety, and versatility, were perceived by administrator co-workers. Neither agreement nor disagreement that the behaviors associated with the dimension, self-disclosure, were perceived was established.

The internal consistency of the five dimensional model of Interpersonal Communication Competence was generally supported by this study. Minor variations of the model based on this research are recommended.

In the second part of this study, Social Style and school district type were analyzed as predictor variables of Interpersonal Communication Competence. The statistical treatments employed indicate that Social Style is a significant factor in the determination of Interpersonal Communication Competence as defined in this study, but school district type was not statistically significant in the overall examination of the construct, Interpersonal Communication Competence.

THREE COMMUNICATION VARIABLES WHICH AFFECT DEFENSIVE AND SUPPORTIVE REACTIONS Order No. 8103845

WINER, STEVEN JOEL, PH.D. *University of Denver*, 1980. 150pp.

The concepts of defensive and supportive behavior are ubiquitous in the field of interpersonal communication. A survey of basic interpersonal texts reveals that most include a discussion, if not a full reproduction, of Jack Gibb's classic article on the subject. Despite its widespread use by communication theorists and textwriters, however, little in the way of exploration, expansion, or application has been done with Gibb's work. Particularly, few research studies have investigated Gibb's theory in terms of specific communication variables or skills which operate in defensive and supportive behavior. The importance of Gibb's pioneer work is evidenced by its extensive use in the field of interpersonal communication. From that initial theory then, specific communication skills should be identifiable which provide specific verbal strategies for influencing defensiveness or supportiveness. The purpose of this dissertation is to report the initial findings of one such attempt to relate verbal usage to defensive and supportive communication.

Based on the review of the literature, four hypotheses were tested: Hypothesis One: Subjects who are exposed to a "literal" "I-You" statement will react more supportively to the statement than will subjects exposed to an "implied" "I-You" statement. Hypothesis Two: Subjects who are exposed to a thought statement about their behavior will react more supportively when the statement contains a verb of probability as the first verb in the statement, than will subjects exposed to a thought statement about their behavior where the first verb in the statement connotes certainty (i.e., forms of the verb "be", "know", "do" or "have"). Hypothesis Three: Subjects will react more supportively to a statement when that statement contains positive feedback, than will subjects exposed to a statement which contains negative feedback. Hypothesis Four: Female receivers and male receivers react differently to defensive-supportive statements.

To test these hypotheses a four-way analysis of variance was computed. Four independent variables were involved in the analysis. These variables were (1) the syntactical structure of the "I" and "You" component, (2) presence or absence of a verb of probability, (3) positive versus negative statements and (4) the gender of the receiver. The ANOVA research design 2 x 2 x 2 x 3 factorial with repeated measures on all variables except gender.

Thirty-two male and thirty-two female students were randomly selected from the general population at a large midwestern university. They were told that they would listen to communicators and rate them on specific dimensions. In two separate sessions, 16 men and 16 women were asked to listen to a video-tape of a speaker who communicated 96 statements. The subjects were asked to respond on a rating scale of one to six (one being highly defensive, six being highly supportive) how the statements made them feel.

Hypothesis One was partially supported by the data. The "literal" "I-You" statement was seen as more supportive than the deceptive "You-Me" in all cases but negative statements with verbs of probability. Additionally it was seen as the most supportive in negative statements that involved a verb of probability. Hypothesis Two was supported by the data, but only in negative "You-Me" statements. The opposite result was found for positive statements. Hypothesis Three was supported by the data. Positive statements were clearly seen as more supportive than negative statements. Finally, Hypothesis Four was not supported by the data. Males and females did not differ in terms of how they reacted to defensive and supportive interaction. Conclusions and limitations were given.

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